Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph entitled "DETAILED DESCRIPTION" beginning at page 3, line 21 as follows:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Fig. 1 illustrates an example of a dissector 10. The dissector 10 includes [[~~and~~]] an elongate shaft 14 having a proximal end 13 and a distal end 15. A handle 12 is connected to the shaft 14 at the proximal end 13. In the present example, the shaft 14 is made from stainless steel, but numerous other materials known in the art may also be employed. The shaft 14 and has a circular cross section along its length and the distal end 15 is a blunt and rounded tip, which tip may be smooth or rough. Any portion of the shaft 14 can be used for dissecting tissue. It should be appreciated, however, that variable cross-sectional shapes are also contemplated, such as a fanned or flatted portions. In addition, the distal end 14 could have numerous other geometries, such as a Y-shaped tip.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 1 as follows:

One illustrative use of the dissector 10 is to separate two adjacent tissues. The distal end 15 is [[~~position~~]] positioned at the junction of the two tissues. As the shaft is moved between the tissues, the two tissue separate and become dissected. By laterally moving the shaft, a wider dissection can be achieved. In many cases, one or both of the tissues being dissected may obstruct the surgeon's line of sight, such that they cannot visually identify the location of the distal end 15. In such situations, [[~~the~~

~~locating~~]] the distal end 15 can be located by observing the diffuse visible energy passing through the obstructing tissue. Accordingly, the operator will have better control and accuracy while dissecting. In addition, by observing the visible energy passing through the tissue the surgeon can differentiate between different tissues. The light source 17 can continuously emit, periodically emit (e.g., a slow or rapid sequence such as with a strobe), or selectively emit the visible energy (e.g., activate the light source only when desired). Being able to locate the distal end 15 which would otherwise be visually obstructed and/or being able to differentiate tissue is particularly useful when dissecting fragile tissue or near sensitive organs.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 22 as follows:

Fig. 2 illustrates another example of a dissector 20. The dissector 20 comprises an elongate shaft 26 with a handle 22 connected to the proximal end of the shaft 26. The shaft 26 is articulated and includes an arcuate and elongate segment 30 distal the joint 28 and a substantially straight segment proximal the joint 28. The segment 30 has blunt and rounded distal end 32, and includes an optional suture hole 36. The segment 30 pivots about a joint 28. In the present example, the segment 30 pivots about a single axis of rotation, but more complicated joints may also be employed. A knob 24 is positioned on handle 22 that actuates and controls the position of the segment 30 by manually rotating the knob 24. The present figure illustrates two exemplary angular positions. The segment 30 shown in solid is positioned in a "straight" or "back" position where the distal end 32 is substantially [[~~aligned with~~]] aligned with the axis of the shaft 26 (i.e., at 0°). As shown in phantom, the segment 30 is in a "bent" or "forward"

position where the distal end 32 is positioned at about 75° from the axis of the shaft 26. The segment 30 can pivot to any position between the extremes of 0°-75°. Alternatively, the segment 30 can be pivoted outside that range (I.e., less than 0° and/or greater than 75°). For instance, one embodiment pivots between -30° and 140°.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 10 as follows:

Fig. 3 illustrates a partial cross-sectional view of the dissector 20. The light source 34 is partially encased within the segment 30 wall and is exposed to define the blunt tip geometry of the distal end 32. A connection rod 25 is positioned in the shaft 26 and connects to the proximal end of the segment 30 with a pin 27 offset from the axis of rotation of the joint 28. The other end of the rod (not shown) is connected to a worm screw that engages a threaded nut connected to the knob 24. Accordingly, the operator can manually rotate the knob 24 which axially moves the rod 25, which in turn pivots the segment 30. One advantage of this embodiment is that [[~~the~~]] after the surgeon releases the knob 24, the angular position of the segment 30 relative the shaft 26 remains secure and relatively rigid. While the present actuation arrangement has certain advantages, other actuation arrangements known in the art may also be used, including without limitation scissors-type handles, rolling wheels, slide levers, spring mechanisms.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 23 as follows:

While the geometry of the arcuate segment 30 may vary significantly based on the targeted anatomy, the following describes the geometry of <u>the</u> present example.

The segment 30 in the present example has a smooth outer surface and a substantially circular cross-sectional shape that tapers slightly toward the distal end 32. The nominal diameter is about 3/16 inch, but a variety of other diameters may be used, including without limitation diameters ranging from 0.5 to 0.075 inches. The length of the segment 30 measured from the distal end 32 to the joint 28 ranges from about 2 to 2.5 inches, but the length may be extended outside this range depending upon the intended medical procedure. For instance, the length may also be between about 0.5 to 4 inches. The arcuate shape of the segment 30 in this example includes an arc portion 46, a proximal linear portion 44, and a distal linear portion 42. The radius of the arc portion 46 shown here is about 1 inch and swept about 90°; however, other arc geometries may be used, including without limitation arc radii ranging from 0.25 to 3 inches and swept 30° to 180°. The proximal linear portion 44 here is about 0.5 inches long and the distal linear portion is about 9.25 inches long. The dimensional range of the linear portions 42, 44 may also be varied substantially. Naturally, the foregoing geometries are merely illustrative and should not be considered limiting.